

KING COUNTY  
STATE OF WASHINGTON

*Fifth Annual Report*  
*of the*  
*County Road Engineer*  
**1939**

*State Golden Jubilee*

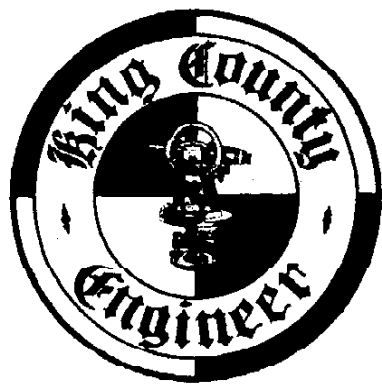
*to the*  
**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

**JACK TAYLOR**  
*Commissioner Second District*  
*Chairman*

**TOM SMITH**  
*Commissioner Third District*

**RUSSELL H. FLUENT**  
*Commissioner First District*

**H. H. SISLER**  
*County Road Engineer*



KING COUNTY  
STATE OF WASHINGTON

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FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT  
of the  
COUNTY ROAD ENGINEER  
1939

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STATE GOLDEN JUBILEE

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*Compiled under the direction of*

H. H. SISLER  
*County Road Engineer*

by

HAROLD LAUFER  
*Chief Clerk*



**GOLDEN JUBILEE**  
**of the**  
**STATE OF WASHINGTON**

**1889-1939**

After fifty years of statehood, it seems only fitting as a contribution to this Golden Jubilee Year to review in a brief way not only the progress made during that period, but to trace the development of Seattle and King County from the earliest days to the present, especially in the activities having a bearing on the county engineer's functions. The early pioneers performed a monumental work, and on the foundation that they built has arisen the magnificent City of Seattle, the largest in King County, in the State of Washington, and, for its age, in the entire country.

Information and statistics appearing in this report have been obtained from these sources:

Records of the King County Engineer's Office  
Proceedings of the King County Commissioners (1853-1939)  
King County Auditor's Reports (1894-1939)  
Miscellaneous Records and Vouchers in the King County Auditor's Vault (1853-1894)  
Miscellaneous Records in the King County Treasurer's Office  
Session of Laws of Washington (1854-1939)  
Bagley's "History of Seattle" (to 1916)  
Prosch's "History of Seattle" (1850-1897)  
Bagley's "History of King County" (to 1929)  
Denny's "Pioneer Days on Puget Sound" (to 1880)  
Sayre's "This City of Ours" (to 1936)

Thanks are due the employees of the Seattle Municipal Reference Library branch of the Seattle Public Library, who helped prepare much of the information concerning population, annexations to the City of Seattle, and the list of County Surveyors and Engineers.

Through the courtesy of Mr. Cecil C. Bagley, son of the author of Bagley's histories of Seattle and of King County, many photographs appearing in this report have been reproduced.



SKYLINE OF SEATTLE

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Harry H. Sisler  
County Road Engineer

Office of  
King County Engineer  
State of Washington  
Seattle

May 1, 1940

To the Honorable Board of  
King County Commissioners,  
Seattle, Washington.

Gentlemen:

I have the honor to submit herewith the fifth annual report of the County Road Engineer for the period January 1st to December 31st, 1939.

Inasmuch as the year just passed witnessed the Golden Jubilee of Washington as a state, it was felt that this annual report should be in the nature of a jubilee document, and it is hoped that a review of the historical background and the engineering accomplishments since the first settlement of this territory in 1852 will serve this purpose.

In road activities and other matters relating to the functions of this office, there has been a perceptible decrease in the work performed. This has been due partly to the reduced amounts available from the motor vehicle fund, and in part to the curtailment of the federal contribution in the form of W.P.A. and P.W.A. aid.

This, as you know, necessitated a decrease in personnel with a consequent reorganization of this office, but notwithstanding the circumstances, the work was carried on smoothly throughout 1939, due largely to the very splendid cooperation of your Honorable Body, the road districts, and the staff of this department, which is deeply appreciated.

Respectfully submitted,

H. H. SISLER  
COUNTY ROAD ENGINEER



**RUSSELL H. FLUENT**  
Commissioner 1st District



**H. H. SISLER**  
County  
Road Engineer



**JACK TAYLOR**  
Commissioner 2nd District  
*Chairman*

**BOARD OF  
KING COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS**

**LACEY V. MURROW**  
State  
Director of Highways



**TOM SMITH**  
Commissioner 3rd District



## COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

MR. JACK TAYLOR,

Commissioner, South District,  
Chairman of the Board.

Since the start of my administration the tremendous growth of population in the suburbs has been continuous, placing upon the county road fund in my district an increasing demand for better transportation facilities. The past year saw the continuation of the general road betterment program. Many fine improvements were completed during this year, including the Foster Avenue Bridge and a number of smaller structures which had been rapidly reaching a stage of deterioration.

The road reconstruction program involved the completion of many miles of widening, straightening and ditching the heavier traveled highways and the construction of pedestrian walks. Such centers of population as White Center, Des Moines, Bryn Mawr, Riverton, Duwamish, Arbor Heights, received a great amount of attention from the road personnel. Adding to my original program to take the South District "Out of the Dust" I am happy to report approximately 35% of the mileage of roads in my district has received dust palliative and oiling treatment.

The river improvement employees in my district have completed many worthwhile river and drainage projects including work on the Cedar and Green Rivers and their tributaries, and drainage streams and ditches.

In 1939, too, began a plan by the Board of County Commissioners, especially Road Commissioner Tom Smith and myself, to place the county road crews on a monthly salary basis, which will increase their efficiency and lead to stabilization of employment.

Citizens of the South District may rest assured that my last year as Commissioner will see many fine road improvements carried to a successful conclusion.

MR. TOM SMITH,

Commissioner, North District.

The year 1939 in Road District No. 3 saw the completion of many fine improvements, included in which is the widening of Holman Roads Nos. 1 and 2 and Greenwood Avenue, making a four-lane highway from the City Limits at 15th N. W., and West 85th Street, to a connection with the Pacific Highway, U. S. No. 99, at North 155th Street. This work was planned and carried out in connection and cooperation with the P. W. A., at a combined expense of approximately \$115,000, King County's share being about \$65,000. The project was conceived in recognition of the fact that when the Ballard Bridge improvement, (then under contemplation by the City of Seattle), was completed, substantial traffic would flow over it from the wholesale and waterfront district through the Holman Roads and Greenwood Avenue to points north.

Other major construction items included a continuation of the extensive program of W. P. A. projects for the improvement of residential and arterial streets throughout the North District. A normal amount of road oiling and surfacing was carried through, and at the end of the year the physical condition of the roads throughout the district was such as to permit your commissioner to take considerable pride in the accomplishments of the year 1939. The public generally approved the program undertaken by the district and many commendatory expressions were received from citizens and from community clubs throughout the area served.

Especially important in the view of the commissioner and others interested in flood control was the completion of the dredging and rock rip rapping program on the Raging River at Fall City. This project, which it is felt has completely eliminated the possibility of future trouble at this point, has been recognized by competent engineers as being an outstanding example of proper flood control procedure.

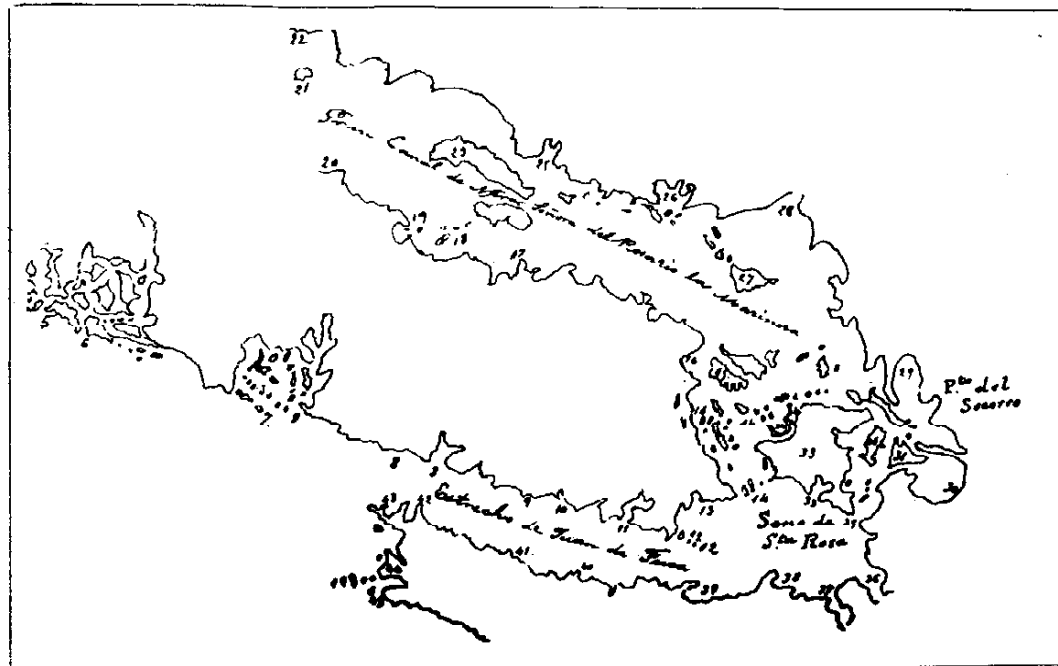
Your commissioner is gratified and pleased to express his appreciation of the cooperation of all of the county forces engaged in this work during the year 1939, and to assure the public that the future will see a continuation of the policies responsible for these accomplishments.

MR. RUSSELL H. FLUENT,

Commissioner, First District.

In the last few years a great deal of tax title real estate has accumulated in the possession of King County, which has lain dormant with no concentration of efforts to push the sale of these parcels and place them back on the tax rolls. A sizeable proportion of this property was located in outlying districts, many of them not served by any means of communication whatsoever, and the work done by the county engineer's office, also in conjunction with the W.P.A., has tended to open up these districts, adding greatly to the real estate values of King County generally and making otherwise unsalable property very desirable.

Since taking office, realizing the importance of liquidating King County owned real estate as quickly as possible, I have established a separate Property Department. Under my guidance, sales have been accelerated and have produced a revenue of \$1,262,917.00 in 1939, with much more than this amount in prospect for many years to come. Sales of such properties have resulted in new homes being built, thus increasing their tax value, and these values and the revenue produced have more than offset the cost of the engineering involved.



MAP SHOWING EXPLORATION OF SPANIARDS, PRIOR TO 1792

## DISCOVERY AND EXPLORATION OF THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

The North Pacific Coast region known by the Spaniards as Alta California, was called New Albion by Captain Frances Drake, New Georgia by Captain George Vancouver, and later New Caledonia. In the United States, the name Oregon was in use for all territory from the summit of the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean and from California to Russian America. By treaty of June 15, 1846, the northern international boundary was determined, and thereafter territory north of the Columbia River to this boundary was called Northern Oregon, until the creation of Washington Territory in 1853.

Although Francis Drake, sailing for England on a voyage round the world, entered either the Bay of San Francisco or of Bodega to refit and provision his vessel, there is no assurance that he sailed north, and the first discoverer of the Pacific Northwest is therefore reputed to have been Apostolos Valerianos, (otherwise known as Juan de Fuca), a Greek navigator in the service of the Viceroy of Mexico, who in 1592 negotiated the straits which bear his name. Exploration of the California Coast continued and it was in 1775 that a Spanish expedition under Captain Bruno Heceta sailed as far north as Alaska. This was followed in 1778 by the voyage of Captain James Cook of the British Navy, who reached Nootka Sound on Vancouver Island, naming Cape Flattery on the way. In 1787 Captain Barclay, representing British interests, discovered Barclay Sound, and his wife who sailed with him thus became the first white woman to enter the Pacific Northwest. The next year witnessed a voyage by Captain John Meares, a British navigator, who was the first to sight and name the great inlet "Juan de Fuca," who discovered Willapa Harbor, and who named Cape Disappointment, Deception Bay, Mount Olympus, etc. At Nootka he established a temporary settlement consisting of Chinese and Hawaiians, which the Spaniards contested, but in 1790 they were compelled to recognize the transfer of these lands to England. From then on, until permanent settlements were made, further explorations by the Spaniards were undertaken in 1790, 1791, 1792, resulting in the many Spanish names for their discoveries, such as Port Angeles, Camano Island, San Juan Archipelago, Fidalgo Bay, etc. March 23, 1792, saw the first temporary settlement of white men in what is now the State of Washington, at Neah Bay, by the Spanish Lieutenant Salvador Fidalgo.

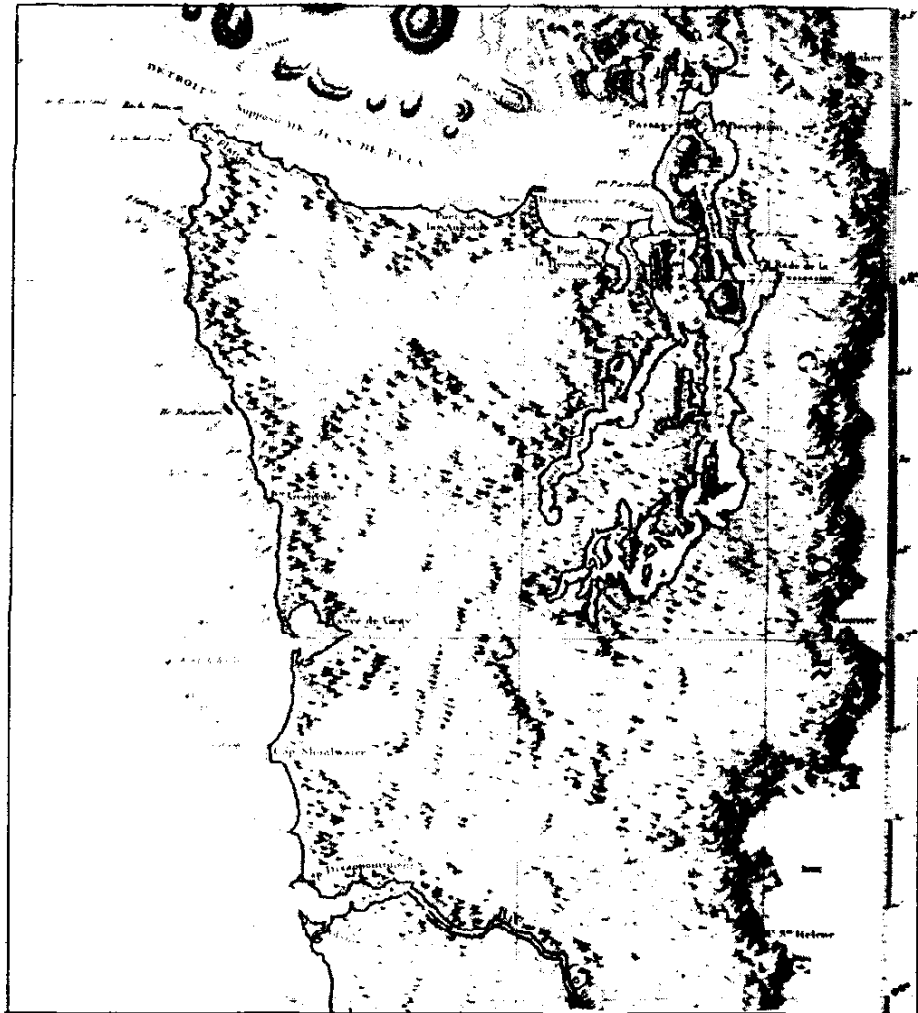
American efforts, mostly for trade, centered at that time on the voyages of Captains John Kendrick and Robert Gray. The latter's first arrival in 1788 resulted in his discovery of Grays Harbor. In the course of his second journey in 1792 he was the first to sail up the great river, which he named "Columbia" after his ship, thus giving this country claim to its vast territory, by priority of discovery.



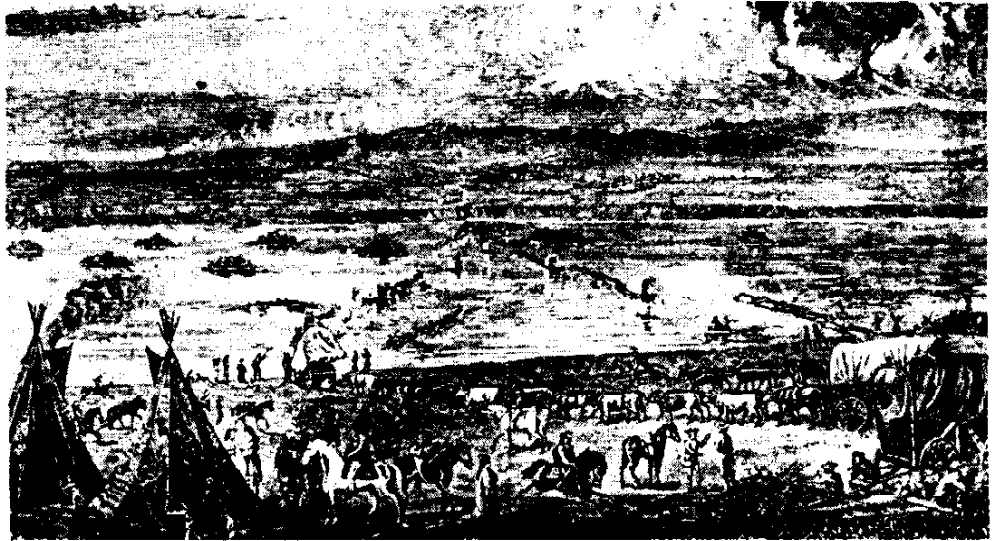
A VIEW OF THE HABITATIONS IN NOOTKA SOUND

The British were active at the same time, and in 1792 Captain George Vancouver of the British Navy became the first white man to enter Puget Sound proper. His voyage accounts for many English names: Gulf of Georgia after George III; Mount Baker, Whidby Island, Port Orchard and Puget Sound after his lieutenants and officers; Mount Rainier after Admiral Rainier; Port Discovery after his ship; Mount Hood and Hood's Canal after Lord Hood; Vashon Island after Captain Vashon of the Royal Navy; Vancouver Island after himself; Port Townsend after Marquis Townshend; Mount St. Helens after the British Ambassador to Spain. Others were Admiralty Inlet, Dungeness, Deception Pass, Bellingham Bay, Birch Bay, Point Roberts, etc. After extensive explorations in Puget Sound, he finally landed on the mainland at what is now Everett, and took formal possession of all territory to the north, naming it New Georgia, after George III.

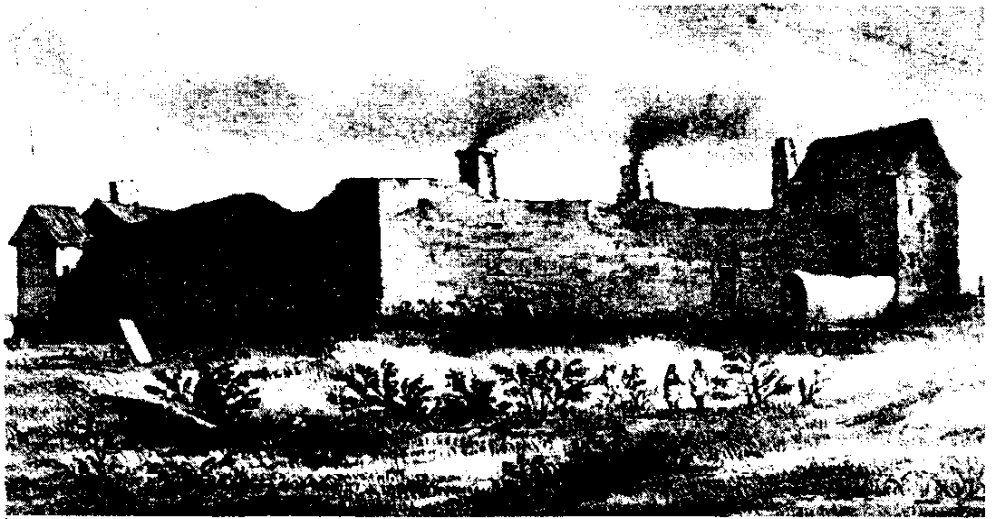
Interesting to note is the fact that Preston's Map of 1856 shows Puget Sound as being those waters about Steilacoom and Nisqually, whereas Admiralty Inlet extends from Vashon to Whidby Island. In time Puget Sound came to mean that portion from Tacoma to Whidby Island, and Admiralty Inlet the narrow stretch between Whidby Island on the one side, and Kitsap and Jefferson Counties on the other. All designations, including the Straits of Juan de Fuca, have in recent years been subordinated to the general description "Puget Sound."



VANCOUVER'S CHART OF PUGET SOUND, 1792



CROSSING THE PLATTE RIVER



FORT HALL ON THE SNAKE RIVER ABOVE AMERICAN FALLS — OUTSIDE

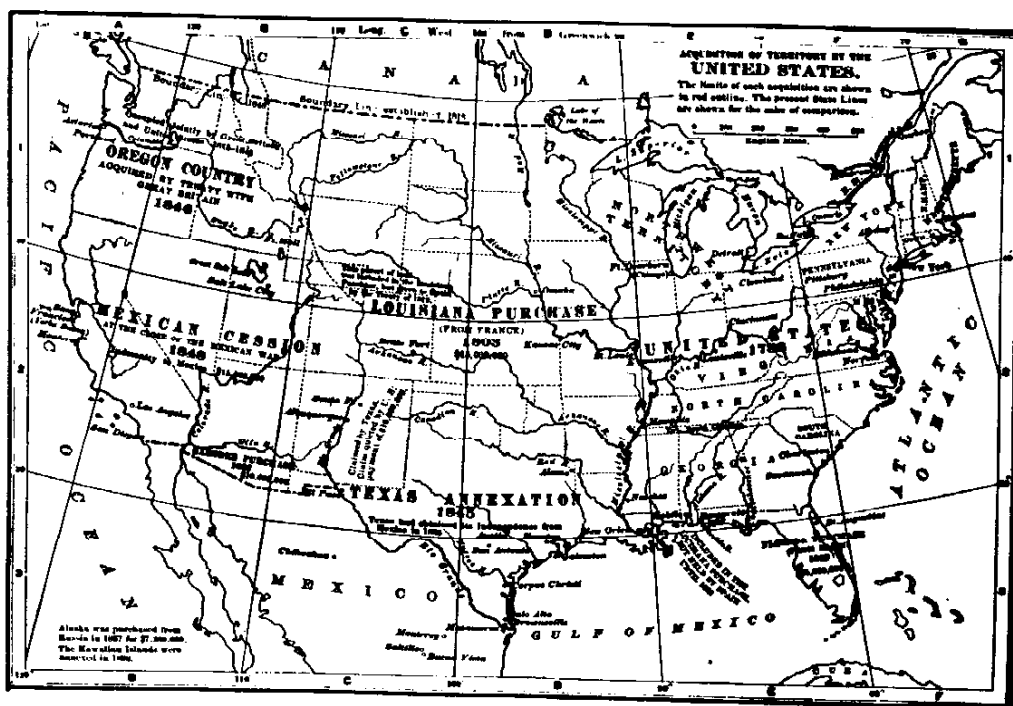
Further American explorations were made by Captains Merriweather Lewis and William Clarke in 1805. Reaching the mouth of the Columbia during that year, they erected Fort Clatsop on Clatsop Beach, Young's Bay, there spending the winter of 1805-6. The result of this expedition was to open up the territory to the hunter and trader, which was followed by immigration to Oregon that began in 1840. By the Florida Treaty with Spain, signed February 22, 1819, the southern boundaries of the United States were definitely fixed from the source of the Arkansas River to the parallel of 42°, westward to the Pacific Ocean. This treaty definitely adjusted any claim that Spain may have had to the Pacific Northwest, but left Great Britain as a rival claimant. Captain Charles Wilkes, the last of the explorers and the first to cross into Eastern Washington over Naches Pass, arrived in the Pacific Northwest in 1841. He named many of his discoveries after subordinate officers, such as Bainbridge, Fox, McNeil, Maury, and Blake Islands, Elliott Bay (earlier known as Duwamish), Colvos and Hales Passages, Budd and Hammersley Inlets, Port Blakely, Port Madison, Port Gamble, Port Ludlow, and Mount Adams. He also named Commencement Bay and Point Defiance in Tacoma.

## SETTLEMENT AND ORGANIZATION OF OREGON TERRITORY

In 1670 the Hudson's Bay Company was chartered to trade with the Indians around Hudson Bay, and held the field for over two centuries until the organization of a rival called the Northwest Company. Expanding across the Canadian wilds, both companies moved in the early 1800's to Northwestern Canada. Up to that time Oregon had no settlements, though in 1810 Captain Nathan Winship of Boston made an attempt at Oak Point on the Columbia, abandoning the project due to floods. In 1811, John Jacob Astor, an American citizen with British partners, founded a trading post on the same river at Astoria. It was already operating when the British Northwest Company moved down from Canada. The War of 1812, occurring just at that time, prompted Astor's British associates to sell him out to the Northwest Company, and caused the temporary transfer of Astoria to the British, who named it Fort George. About 1821 the two English companies merged, retaining the name Hudson's Bay Company. Three years later the headquarters were removed from Astoria to Fort Vancouver, further up on the Columbia. A second trading post, Fort Langley, was built on the Fraser River in 1827 and it was on a trip to this post that the famed Cowlitz Trail so well known to the early pioneers was first used. Other trading posts established were Fort Okanogan, Port Colville, and Spokane House in 1811-14; Walla Walla, 1818; Nisqually, 1833; Cowlitz, 1838; Victoria, 1843; etc.

There were as yet no permanent American settlements, and the first of these were made by missionaries Jason and Daniel Lee, who located on the Willamette about ten miles north of the present City of Salem in 1834; by Dr. and Mrs. Whitman, who stopped near Walla Walla in 1836, and by Reverends Ellis and Walker, who came to the vicinity of Spokane in 1838. More missionary settlements were founded at Fort Nisqually in 1839; Cowlitz, 1838-9; Whidby Island, 1840, and Fort Vancouver, 1840.

Until the arrival of these missionaries the Hudson's Bay Company held undisputed sway over the Oregon country, and constituted whatever government existed. By 1842 American trappers began to gather in the Willamette Valley welcoming many newcomers from the East and by the next year a provisional government was established by the Americans, actually a republic within a republic, their definite status not having yet been determined. A code of laws was drafted, officers elected, and as it began to function, control of this vast region passed from the Hudson's Bay Company. The legislature met at Oregon City in 1844, effected an organization, elected George Abernethy as Governor and W. M. McCarver (who later founded Tacoma) as Speaker, and at once enacted a law fixing their boundaries: "Commenc-



MAP SHOWING TERRITORIAL ACQUISITIONS OF U. S. A.  
Including  
OREGON COUNTRY

ing at the parallel of 42°, as agreed between the United States and New Mexico, where it meets the Pacific Ocean, thence north along the coast to where the parallel of 54° 40' strikes the same, thence east along said parallel as agreed between the United States and Russia to the summit of the Rocky Mountains, thence south following the summit to the parallel of 42°, and then to place of beginning." By June 15th, a treaty was concluded with Great Britain, definitely settling the northern boundary at the parallel of 49°. The republic continued under a provisional government until March 3, 1849, when congressional action established the Oregon Territory with Joseph Lane as the first territorial governor. By that time the territory was divided into five districts, with a population totalling 304 settlers north of the Columbia. In 1852 the capital was removed from Oregon City to Salem.

## SETTLEMENT AND ORGANIZATION OF WASHINGTON TERRITORY

The first American pioneers, other than traders and missionaries, to settle in what is now the State of Washington, arrived in 1844, from the Willamette Valley, among them being Michael T. Simmons, who located at the mouth of the Deschutes River, where he started a settlement called Newmarket, since named Tumwater. In 1846, came among others, Levi L. Smith and Edmund Sylvester, who founded a community called Smithfield, which in 1850 was platted as the town of Olympia. Here the first frame house on Puget Sound was built by Isaac N. Ebey, (who later moved to Whidby Island). It was used as post office, custom house, store, etc. As a consequence of Indian troubles, the United States Government, about 1850, established Fort Steilacoom, and the first court in Lewis County was held there to try some Indian murderers.

The leader in opening up the Washington area was Michael T. Simmons, one of the first Thurston County commissioners, first townsite proprietor, first millowner, first ship owner, first postmaster, first merchant, and member of the first Washington Territorial Convention. Trade proceeded briskly but without regulation, until on

February 14, 1851, Congress established the Puget Sound Customs District, the port of entry being Olympia. Simpson P. Moses was the first Collector of Customs, and the Schooner *Exact* the first vessel to clear the port.

With trade came further settlement of the region, and each month adventurous pioneers went a few miles to the north of their nearest neighbors. As these new areas grew in population, new counties were formed to give them the benefit of law and order, but distances were too great to allow for rapid and safe communication between county seats and the capital of Oregon Territory. Soon the residents north of the Columbia River felt that the creation of a new territory would give them the protection of the law nearer at hand than under the direction of Oregon territorial officials. Agitation begun in 1852 resulted in a convention at Monticello to memorialize Congress for the establishment of a new territory to be called "Columbia" with the Columbia River as the southern and eastern boundaries. Delegates from Seattle were Luther M. Collins, Charles C. Terry, George N. McConaha, William N. Bell, John N. Low, Arthur A. Denny, and Dr. David S. Maynard. Presented to Congress, the memorial was adopted on March 2, 1853, with a change in name from Columbia to Washington. The Organic Act defined these boundaries: "All of Oregon Territory south of the parallel of 49° and north of the Columbia River from its mouth to where the parallel of 46° crosses said river near Fort Walla Walla, thence along said parallel to the summit of the Rocky Mountains." This vast area was reduced by about 70 per cent when on March 3, 1863 Congress created Idaho Territory. The first census in 1853, showed a total population of 3,965 divided as follows: Clarke, 1,134; Island, 195; Jefferson, 189; King, 170; Lewis, 616; Pacific 152; Pierce, 513; Thurston, 996.

First appointments made by President Franklin Pierce were: Isaac Ingalls Stevens of Massachusetts, Governor and Superintendent of Indian Affairs; Charles H. Mason of Rhode Island, Secretary; J. C. Clendenin of Louisiana, Attorney; J. Patton Anderson of Mississippi, Marshal; Edward Lander of Indiana, Chief Justice; Isaac Ebey of Whidby Island, Collector of Customs. First election to the Territorial Legislative Assembly from King County, held at Seattle and Alki, on January 30, 1854, resulted in the selection of a delegate to the Territorial House of Representatives, and two to the Council. Soon after, February 27, 1854, the first territorial legislature met, and their proceedings were the first laws to be printed in book form.

The seat of government of Washington Territory was, by legislation passed January 9, 1855, established and located on the land claim of Edmund Sylvester, in the town of Olympia, which was incorporated in 1859. Next year the legislature transferred the location to Vancouver, but eventually Olympia was definitely designated. In 1869 the legislature voted to submit to the electorate the question of framing a constitution and applying for admission as a state. This was the beginning of agitation which resulted in Congress admitting Washington into the Union in 1889 as the forty-second state. A constitutional convention was held, King County's delegates being John P. Hoyt, Thomas T. Minor, John R. Kinnear, David E. Durie, M. J. McElroy, Morgan Morgans, George W. Tibbetts, Richard Jeffs and W. L. Newton. Adopted by the convention, the state constitution was ratified by the people at the October election of 1889.

The first newspaper established in the Territory of Washington was the *Columbian* at Olympia, on September 10, 1852 by James W. Wiley and Thomas F. McElroy. Known successively as the *Washington Pioneer* and the *Pioneer Democrat*, in 1861 its material passed to the *Overland Press* which was succeeded by the *Pacific Tribune*, which in turn, after its removal to Seattle was merged with the *Intelligencer* (founded in 1865 as a weekly). The *Post-Intelligencer* resulted from a consolidation of the *Post* and the *Intelligencer* in October, 1881.



FORT NISQUALLY—ESTABLISHED 1833 BY HUDSON'S BAY CO.



INDIAN WAR TIME BLOCKHOUSE

## SETTLEMENT AND ORGANIZATION OF KING COUNTY

The first evidence then, of American control in the Willamette Valley was the provisional government of the Territory of Oregon organized in 1843. By 1849, this was replaced by the permanent organization of Oregon. One of the six districts into which it was divided was named Vancouver, (changed to Clarke County in July, 1849) embracing the vast region north and west of the Columbia River, with the summit of the Rocky Mountains as the eastern boundary. It was from this district that all the counties in Washington were created, the first of them being Lewis County, which on December 21, 1845 was set off from Vancouver. It consisted of the area west of the Cowlitz River and the summit of the Rocky Mountains, and north of the Columbia River to the parallel of 54° 40', the southern boundary of the Russian possessions.

On January 12, 1852 Lewis County was divided by creating Thurston County, which covered all the Puget Sound country and was named after Samuel R. Thurston, Oregon's first territorial delegate to Congress. In June of the same year the first county officers for Thurston were elected, and as there were then no precincts north of Steilacoom Seattle people had no vote. The first Thurston County Commissioners were A. A. Denny of Seattle, S. S. Ford, Sr. of Skookum Chuck, and David Shelton of Hammersley Inlet, and at their first session, the county was divided into two precincts, one of which constituted what is now King and Snohomish Counties. Before the establishment of King County, or the Territory of Washington, and by act of the Oregon Legislature, Dr. D. S. Maynard became the first Justice of the Peace and the first Notary Public at Seattle.

On December 22, 1852, Thurston County was divided into King, Pierce, Island and Jefferson Counties. The first two were named after the successful candidates for President and Vice-President—Franklin Pierce of New Hampshire and William Rufus King of Alabama. Thus, King County was the fourth in succession organized north of the Columbia River, all while yet subject to the Oregon Territory. Its original boundaries were: "Commencing at the northeast corner of Pierce County, thence along the Cascade Mountains to a parallel passing through Pilot Cove, thence from the point last aforesaid west along the said parallel of latitude to the Pacific Ocean, thence south along the Coast to a point due west of the head of Case's Inlet, thence east along the northern boundary line of Pierce County to the place of beginning." Pilot Cove was named by Captain Wilkes in 1841, and from his description, it appears to be near what is known as Point No-Point. Thus it will be seen that King County extended from the Cascade Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. After creating other counties out of it, such as Slaughter in 1857 (subsequently named Kitsap), legislation on January 31, 1867 designated the King County boundary as follows: "Commencing where the fifth standard parallel line strikes the mainland near the head of Commencement Bay, thence east along said parallel line to the middle of the main channel of the White River, thence up the middle of the main channel of the White River to the forks of White River and Greenwater, thence up the main channel of Greenwater to the summit of the Cascade Mountains, thence northerly along said summit to the southeast corner of Township 27 north, Range 11 east, it being a point due east of the northeast corner of Township 26 north, Range 4 east, thence west to Admiralty Inlet, thence southerly along the main channel of Admiralty Inlet, Colvos Passage and Commencement Bay, to the fifth standard parallel and place of beginning."

The first officials appointed for King County by the Oregon legislature in 1853 were John N. Low, Luther M. Collins, and Arthur A. Denny, as County Commissioners, and the minutes of their first official meeting are herein illustrated as being of interest. Other officials appointed were H. L. Yesler, Probate Clerk and C. D. Boren, Sheriff. In the same year, the county seat was designated at

## Seattle King County Washington Territory

Be it remembered that on this 5<sup>th</sup> day of March A.D. 1853. the County Commissioners Court of King County, was convened at the house of L. S. Maynard in the Town of Seattle, and duly organized in accordance with an act of the Legislative Assembly of Oregon Territory.

Present L. M. Collins and A. A. Denny Commissioners and H. L. Yesler, Clerk. The following business was had & transacted

Ordered that the following named persons be summoned to serve as grand Jurors - Robert: George Holt, Jacob Mapel, Samuel Mapel, Henry Pierce, Henry Smith, Edward A. Clark, and James Wilson. And as Petit Jurors, David McDenny, Wm. N. Bell, John Sampson, John McCoy, Wm. Orr, David Meares, William Ellerbe & Henry Bennett

Ordered that the Court adjourn to meet on the first Monday in April.

Signed { A. A. Denny  
L. M. Collins } Commissioners

### MINUTES OF FIRST COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MEETING March 5th, 1853

Seattle on the land claim of Dr. D. S. Maynard, where the election precinct was also established. In the first election held in Seattle, for delegate to the Oregon territorial legislature, A. A. Denny was chosen.

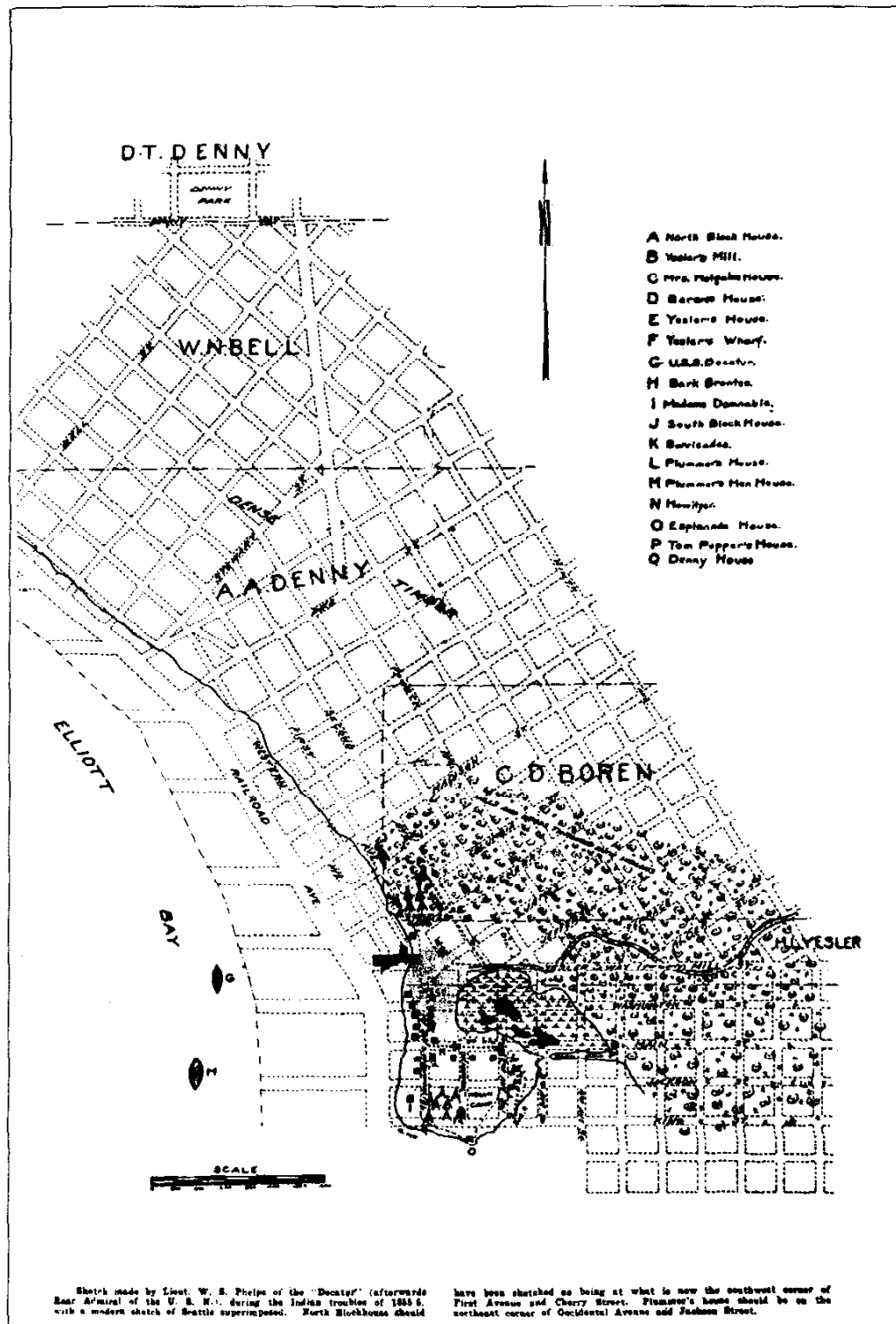
Upon organization of the Washington Territory, an act was passed replacing these officials and appointing the following until the next annual election: Thomas Mercer, G. W. W. Loomis and L. M. Collins, Commissioners; C. D. Boren, Sheriff; H. L. Yesler, Auditor; William P. Smith, Treasurer; Henry A. Smith, Superintendent of Schools; John C. Holgate, Assessor; William A. Strickler, Probate Judge; John A. Chase, S. L. Grow and S. W. Russell, Justices of the Peace; B. L. Johns, S. B. Simons and James N. Roberts, Constables. Pursuant to legislation providing for the election of county officials to replace those appointed, the first held under the laws of Washington Territory on September 4th, 1854 resulted in: Thomas Mercer, C. C. Lewis, and Alfred Savage, Commissioners; Thomas S. Russell, Sheriff; John Henning, Assessor; Henry Adams, Auditor; Henry A. Smith, School Superintendent; W. N. Bell, Coroner; Sumner B. Hines, Wreckmaster; and A. A. Denny to the Washington Territorial House of Representatives. A peculiar office created by the legislature in 1854 was that of Wreckmaster, (abolished in 1915) charged with salvaging possible wrecks off the Coast, and Hilary Butler was the first one appointed for King County. Some subsequent first appointments were William A. Strickler, County Surveyor, in 1854 and Isaac M. Hall, County Attorney, in 1856. In fact, in the early days there were so many offices to be filled for the number of people available that many times one person held as many as six in the course of a year.

By 1851, there existed these settlements: Astoria 1811, Walla Walla 1818, Vancouver (on the Columbia) 1824, Nisqually 1833, Cowlitz 1838, Victoria 1843, Tumwater 1845, Olympia 1850, and Steilacoom, Port Townsend, and Oak Harbor on Whidby Island all in 1851. Although Isaac N. Ebey, Dr. D. S. Maynard, and others explored the site which is now Seattle, and John Holgate in 1849 staked out a land claim near the mouth of the Duwamish River intending to return later from the Willamette Valley, the first permanent settlement in King County was not made until September 15, 1851 by Luther M. Collins, Jacob and Samuel Maple, and Henry Van Asselt and family, who located at the mouth of the Duwamish River. E. B. Maple joined them in 1852.

Another settlement in King County was founded on September 28, 1851 at Alki, by David T. Denny, John N. Low and Leander Terry who came from Olympia in a sailboat with Captain Robert C. Fay. Soon Low went back to Portland, returning to Alki on November 13th with his family, Carson D. Boren, William Bell, and their families, Charles C. Terry and Arthur A. Denny. Convinced that their community was destined to become a flourishing metropolis Terry named the spot New York after his home town. Soon after the Chinook word "Alki" (meaning "by and by") was facetiously added, the town becoming known as New York-Alki, and in time just Alki. In the plat of 1853 it is called Alki-on-New York Point, though the United States Government still adheres to the name Battery Point. Here was built the first house in King County for J. N. Low, and here too the Terrys and Low established the first mercantile enterprise in King County known as the "New York Trading House." Lee Terry returned soon to New York and after Low sold out in 1853 to move to Olympia, the firm became known as the "New York Cash Store" with C. C. Terry as sole owner. Two years later he too moved to Seattle, having bought 150 acres from Boren and traded 320 acres of his Alki claim for 260 acres of Maynard's, all of which was eventually platted as the Terry Addition to the Town of Seattle. This was a disastrous transaction for Maynard, who sold the entire Alki property for \$460.00 in 1868.

On February 13th, 1852 Bell, Boren, and the Dennys of the Alki pioneers, not having any ownership rights in that settlement, decided to locate four or five miles north where the harbor was better, timber as good for the development of the lumber trade with San Francisco, and agricultural opportunities greater. Here they staked out three claims in one body of land, located at the present heart of Seattle, Boren's being the most southerly, (his south line about where Pioneer Place now stands), followed by A. A. Denny, with W. N. Bell in what developed into Belltown. Later, adjoining Bell on the north was D. T. Denny, whose claim fronted on the Sound and Lake Union. In April came Dr. D. S. Maynard from Olympia, and in October, Henry L. Yesler, for whom the original pioneers made room by relinquishing part of their claims. Thomas Mercer who came in April 1853 took up a claim north of D. T. Denny, Mercer Street being the dividing line between them. His claim also fronted on Lake Union, which, as well as Lake Washington received their names at his suggestion, though the latter lake in Preston's map of 1856 is still called Duwamish. By 1885, his and D. T. Denny's Tracts were included within Seattle's limits. In the original company that came with Thomas Mercer, was Aaron Mercer who first settled on the east side of Lake Washington, where his name is perpetuated in Mercer Island and Mercer Slough.

The land on which these pioneers settled on Elliott Bay was at first known as Dewamps but in 1852 named Seattle after their best Indian friend Chief Seattle (Sealth). West of First Avenue and First Avenue South was the beach. The bay curved east at King Street then north a short distance, again east to about Ninth Avenue South (foot of Beacon Hill) and then south in a wide sweep for miles. At high tide an island of about twenty acres was formed by the overflow at Washington Street, on which for about twenty-five years practically all of Seattle's business was centered. The map on the next page explains the position of this island and the lagoon to the east of it. Most of the area constituted Maynard's claim which fronted on First Avenue South from Yesler's sawmill at Yesler Way, four blocks south to the bay at King Street. The beach along the waterfront from



MAP OF EARLY SEATTLE, 1855-6

(Reprinted from Denny's Pioneer Days on Puget Sound)

Columbia to Madison Streets was lined with Indian shacks until they were driven off by the advance of business. Of the original site, very few blocks east from the Sound were level, but by cutting down the highlands, filling in the lowlands, driving back the sea, and grading the streets, the main business portion of the town took on the appearance evident today.

Continued settlement of Seattle and incidentally King County was made possible largely by Henry L. Yesler, who in 1852 erected the first steam sawmill in the county, at about First Avenue and Yesler Way, thus giving the struggling pioneers the assurance of some employment, and constituting an invitation for others to come. Originally planned for Alki, the early settlers fearing the rise of a rival town, rearranged the lines of their claims to offer Yesler a site for his mill, which was accepted. After Yesler, came Maynard; then Dr. Henry A. Smith of Smith's Cove, Edmund Carr, John Ross, Erasmus M. Smithers, William A. Strickler and seven others, who located around the body of water, discovered by the Denny's on an exploration trip and named Salmon Bay by the settlers. By 1853, the region near Kent, Thomas and Auburn could boast of about twelve families, five around Foster, six on the Black River, two along the Duwamish at Riverton, and eleven on the Duwamish at what is now South Seattle. On the west side of Lake Washington near the present Seward Park were four families. On the bay south of town were four. In Rainier Valley was located one large family. By 1860 settlements increased not only near Seattle, but in such remote areas as the Snoqualmie Prairie. In Seattle itself, that year, there were only about twenty families, all located between Seneca and King Streets, west of Third Avenue. Ten years later King County had gained but little in population, there being nothing between Cedar River and Issaquah, nor between Issaquah and Snoqualmie. In fact, in all King County there were only six post offices; Seattle, Black River, White River, Slaughter, Squak (Issaquah) and Snoqualmie. Slaughter (subsequently Auburn), settled in 1868, was up to that time included in the region known as White River.

Of the settlements near Seattle that have since been included in the City, Alki was the most important. In 1853 both Alki and Seattle were platted as townsites. They were about the same size, and retained their separate activities and were jealous rivals for more than five years. Subsequently the plat of the Town of Alki was vacated, and after Charles C. Terry moved to Seattle, it soon faded away as a town, to be revived some fifty years later, becoming part of West Seattle, and in 1907 annexed to Seattle. Another portion of West Seattle included in this annexation was the high promontory directly across the bay, called at first Lamb's Point (Duwamish Head), in the 1860's Freeport, in 1877 Milton and finally West Seattle. Duwamish (later Georgetown), South Seattle, and Rainier Valley already settled by 1853 were also added to Seattle in 1910, 1905, and 1883 respectively. By 1879 a town of nearly 50 houses and about 500 people had grown up on the shores of Lake Union. Ballard, annexed to Seattle in 1907, was the name given to the Gilman Addition, consisting of 800 acres platted in 1887 by William Ballard, John Leary and associates, operating as the West Coast Improvement Company. Shortly before 1889 H. L. Yesler sold his sawmill in Seattle to develop large real estate holdings, later erecting another mill on Union Bay, Lake Washington, around which grew up the town of Yesler, since absorbed by the Laurelhurst District, which was taken over by Seattle in 1910.

By 1880, with the advent of the railroads, the phenomenal growth of the Pacific Northwest began in which Seattle and King County shared. Many new regions were settled, and many new towns established throughout the county. Though particulars concerning all of them are not readily available, the development of those playing a part in the early history of the county is roughly outlined.

*WHITE RIVER VALLEY.* Next to Seattle, this valley received the greatest influx of early pioneers. Beginning with the first arrivals along the Duwamish on September 15th, 1851. (Henry Van Asselt, L. M. Collins, Jacob Maple and Samuel Maple), the year 1853, when Naches Pass was opened to immigrants, brought a considerable increase in population. In that year, A. L. Porter settled on the prairie known by his name, and Dominick Corcoran and James Riley located on

Muckleshoot Prairie, these three being the most remote settlements in the valley. Lower down, were John M. Thomas, Moses Kirkland, William H. Brannan, and nine others. Near the junction of the Black and White Rivers, were William H. Gilliam, the Fosters, Bryant, and Brownell. Further up the Black River, came Dr. R. M. Bigelow, who discovered coal in that region, and three others. On the Duwamish were John Buckley, George Holt, Eli B. Maple, C. C. Lewis and five others. Until the construction of the railroad in the 1880's travel was by water, Indian trails, or crude roads constructed by the settlers, even the Military Road which followed the bluffs on the west of the valley being in that class. The coming of the railroad and the working of the coal mines made communication between settlements much easier. Until 1886, what is today Kent, Auburn, Thomas, Christopher, O'Brien and Orillia, were all known as White River from the Post Office of that name established in 1861 at the Neely residence in what is now O'Brien, D. A. Neely being the first Postmaster.

**O'BRIEN**

**ORILLIA**

**THOMAS**

**CHRISTOPHER**

The town of O'Brien was settled in 1868 by the brothers Morgan and Terence O'Brien from Victoria, B. C., around which center an Irish colony grew. Henry Adams was the first to locate at Orilla in 1853. Both are farming communities. The site of Thomas, midway between Kent and Auburn, was first farmed by John Thomas (a brother-in-law of Charles C. Terry) in 1853. Christopher, another farming community between Thomas and Auburn was named for Thomas Christopher one of the first Norwegians to settle in King County, 1863.

**AUBURN.** Originally platted in 1886 as the Town of Slaughter by Dr. Levi W. Ballard, the site was part of a tract he had homesteaded in 1875. However, as early as 1868 the name of this town appeared in the records, commemorating Lieutenant Slaughter who was killed in 1856 during the Indian Wars. When platted it was a village no larger than Christopher, but by having the county build a short cut from the Green River Road, traffic was diverted to it, resulting in its rapid growth. Due to a growing dislike of the name "Slaughter," it was changed in 1893 to Auburn, being incorporated June 1, 1891.



EARLY VIEW OF MAIN STREET, AUBURN

**KENT.** Though settled in 1853 by James J. Crow, (another brother-in-law of Charles C. Terry), D. A. Neely and S. W. Russell (Crow's brother-in-law), what is now Kent was still a small village. It was named after the railroad station, which in turn received that designation from Kent, England, where hops were raised as they were in the Kent area. It is peculiar that none of the old pioneers had thought of platting the town, and it was not until 1884 that H. L. Yesler did so, naming it Yesler, the region being now known as Yesler's First Addition to Kent. Four years later John Alexander filed the first plat using the name Kent, though it is said that before this the village had also been called Titusville. Many additions to the plat followed, and on May 26, 1890, Kent was incorporated as a town, in 1909 annexing certain surrounding territory.

**RENTON.** First settler at Renton was Henry H. Tobin, in 1853. Dying soon afterwards, his widow married Erasmus M. Smithers, who platted the town in 1876, naming it after Capt. William Renton, one of the founders of the Renton Coal Company. Incorporated on September 3, 1901, additional territory was annexed in 1909 and again in 1924. but next year, the city limits were again reduced.



FIRST SCHOOLHOUSE AT RENTON, ABOUT 1859

**ISSAQUAH.** The little valley at the head of Lake Sammamish was known as Squak, a corruption of the Indian name spelled Isquowh, which is today known as Issaquah. The first settler was L. B. Andrews who went there in 1863 to develop a coal mine, and attracted during the next year about 24 others. Communication with Seattle was over a rough foot-path which began at Coal Creek on the east shore of Lake Washington. On the building of the Seattle, Lake Shore and Eastern Railway which tapped the Gilman mines in the Squak coal fields, the region was platted as the Town of Englewood in 1888 by Ingebright Wold who had settled there in 1867. The mines had been named in honor of Daniel H. Gilman who promoted the railroad, and by general consent the town soon took that designation and was listed as Gilman, when incorporated on April 25, 1892. The post office which had been known as Squak was given the name Olney to avoid mistaking it for another town in Washington called Gilman. Confusion from so many names resulted, until in 1890 both town and post office were listed as Issaquah.

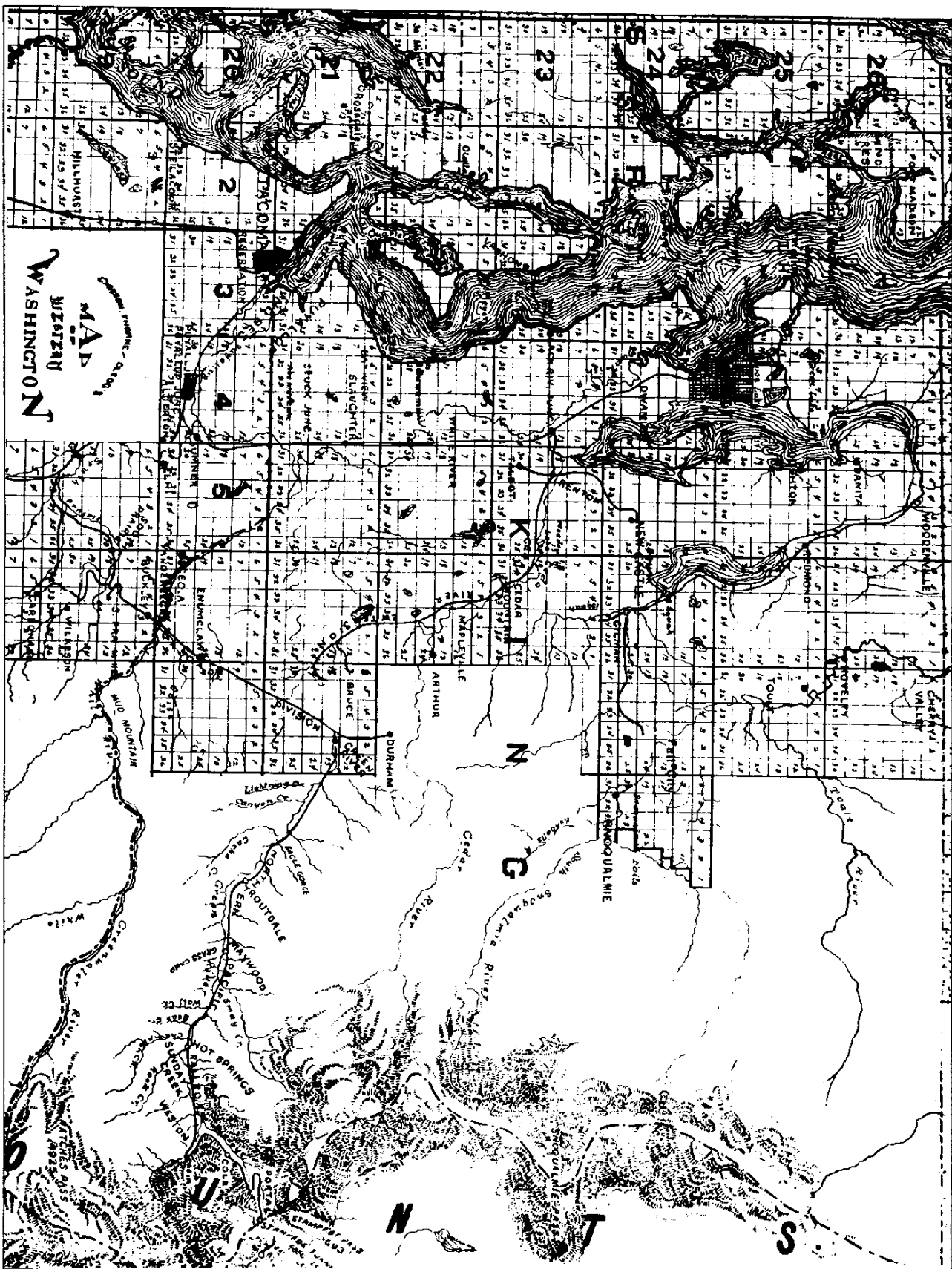
**MONOHON** The first of these was founded by Martin Monohon in 1877.  
**PRESTON** Preston received its name from William Preston, an associate  
**HIGH POINT** of D. H. Gilman in building the Seattle Lake Shore and Eastern  
 Railway. High Point, settled by John Lovegren in 1905, was so  
 named because it was the top of a steep grade of the Northern Pacific's Snoqualmie  
 branch.

**SNOQUALMIE VALLEY.** Next to the White River Valley, in historical importance to King County is the fertile Snoqualmie, named after the Indians inhabiting the region before the white man came. Three forks of the Snoqualmie River originate in the Cascades, which merge into a common stream at the base of Mount Si, named after an early settler near North Bend, called Josiah Merritt (Uncle Si). Settlement began in 1858 by Jeremiah W. Borst and the Kellogg Brothers, at which time from Salmon Bay to the prairie there was not a single white inhabitant. By the 1860's the prairie was fairly well taken up and the pioneers began to stake claims below the Falls. Outstanding among them all was Borst, whose farm at what is now Meadowbrook, was the last contact with civilization west of the Pass. He was the first postmaster in this region, the first farmer and the first storekeeper. He was the first to engage in meat curing and packing, selling his product in Seattle, and bringing back provisions which he sold to the other settlers. Besides lumbering and farming, mining promised to be an important industry due to the discovery of iron ore deposits in 1869 by A. A. Denny and party. By 1870, in the entire Snoqualmie and Squak Valleys there were only thirty-one adult whites, and up to 1888 there was no settlement in villages, the region being covered with widespread farms. The platting of towns only began with the coming of the railroad to Sallal Prairie.

**FALL CITY** Of the three villages into which the scattered  
**NORTH BEND** farms crystallized, Fall City (originally settled in  
**SNOQUALMIE** 1870) was the first to be laid out as a town in 1887  
**SNOQUALMIE FALLS** by Jerry Borst. Originally platted as Snoqualmie  
 by William H. Taylor in 1889, and for awhile called  
 Mountain View, as the neighboring town of Snoqualmie Falls began to become known as Snoqualmie, North Bend was incorporated as a city on March 1, 1909, being so named because of its situation near the bend toward the north of the Snoqualmie River's South Fork. Snoqualmie Falls was also platted in 1889 by the Snoqualmie Land and Improvement Company on the left bank of the river just above the falls, and gradually taking the name Snoqualmie, it was so incorporated on May 29, 1903. What is now Snoqualmie Falls is the mill town which grew up later on the hill beyond the right bank of the river.

**CARNATION** Though the Snoqualmie River traverses the valley in King  
**DUVALL** County, its lower reaches before joining the Snohomish are  
**NOVELTY** located in the Snohomish Valley. There were no roads at first  
 from Seattle to the region which is now Duvall, Carnation, and  
 Novelty. The early residents therefore had to utilize the river as their highway and their interests were naturally more closely linked with Snohomish rather than King County. Eventually, however, the Seattle Lake Shore and Eastern Railroad and the building of highways brought this area into close touch with Seattle, and it began to develop. Tolt was settled as early as 1865, (the name being derived from the Indians called Tolthue), was platted in 1902 by W. H. Lord, incorporated on December 30, 1912, and its name was changed to Carnation by the State Legislature in 1917 in recognition of the large establishment the Carnation Milk Company built there. Duvall, named after James Duvall who located there in 1875, was platted in October, 1910, by John D. Bird, and incorporated on January 6, 1913. Novelty was first settled in 1870. In 1886, the post office for the entire region was Cherry Valley situated on Snoqualmie River.

**ENUMCLAW AREA.** The first settlement in the region where Enumclaw is located took place in 1853 when A. L. Porter located on Porter's Prairie. By 1870, James McClintock had taken up a claim on Newauken Creek with George Vanderveck



KING COUNTY ABOUT 1880  
(Reprinted from Map of Western Washington, Loaned by Kroll Map Co.)

*BOTHELL.* The Bothell family came from Seattle in 1886 to engage in logging operations, and the town was named after them, was platted by David C. Bothell in 1888, and incorporated on April 12, 1909.

*WOODINVILLE.* After the sale of M. D. Woodin's tannery in Seattle, his son Ira took up a claim on the Sammamish River in 1872, founding this town which was named after his family.

*JUANITA.* Settled in 1870, it was first known as Hubbard, but was not platted as a townsite until 1921.

*HOUGHTON.* On Lake Washington, south of Kirkland, it was first settled in 1875, and named after the Houghton family of which Willard Houghton was an early logger.

*BELLEVUE.* Settled in the 1880's, as early as 1887 it boasted a post office. The town was platted in 1904 by Oliver F. Franz.

*MEDINA.* Bellevue's neighboring residential suburb on the north, it was first platted as Medina Heights in 1914 by E. A. Barnes.

*MAPLE VALLEY.* This town was created by the Columbia and Puget Sound Railroad when that line was built from Franklin to Black Diamond. George W. Ames is said to have been the first settler, forcing his way through the wilderness from Seattle in 1879. Soon others selected homesteads in the vicinity. Although the town was laid out in 1887, the first recorded plat was filed by F. A. Hill in 1890, the name Maple Valley being suggested by the original resident, G. W. Ames.

*RAVENSDALE.* Settlement was begun in 1900 when the Leary Coal Company opened their mines here. The townsite was laid out by the Northern Pacific Railway and incorporated on August 4, 1913. It was at one time destroyed by fire, but was nevertheless, never disincorporated.

*TUKWILA.* South of Seattle and formerly known as Garden Station, it received its present name in 1905 when the post office was established there. In the Indian tongue, it means land of hazelnuts. It was not originally platted as a town, but was formed by the merging of several plats, the first in 1902, and the balance in 1903. The town was incorporated June 16, 1908.

*PACIFIC CITY.* Founded by C. D. Hillman, an active real estate operator, it was platted as an "Addition to Seattle" in 1906, and incorporated on August 2, 1909.

*DES MOINES.* The first settler in the 1870's was John Moore, but the townsite was not laid out until 1889 by the Des Moines Improvement Company, a member of which firm J. W. Klee named it after his former home in Iowa. Considered a town since 1890, it has never been incorporated as such.

A study of King County maps since 1880 reveals a great increase in the number of communities. When the railroads penetrated new areas, stations were set at convenient locations, around which in time, many settlements grew up. Coal mining was responsible for the founding of other communities, and beach resorts frequently developed a population of all-year residents. Real estate additions and sub-divisions also caused the growth of many areas, some of them absorbed by Seattle. At present, including railroad stations, junctions and crossings, beach localities, farming settlements, towns and cities (excluding Seattle) there are a total of 181 such places in King County, most of them in the western area. It is certain that the future will see new communities developed, since the early migrations from the east are today being duplicated by an increasingly great number of arrivals from the dust bowls of the middle west.